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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO.
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09/517,383 03/26/98 POOL

EXAMINER	AGROGUS
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008176 PM82/0522
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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
LUU, 1	71

DATE MAILED:

05/22/01

This is a communication from the examiner in charge of your application.
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

OFFICE ACTION SUMMARY

Responsive to communication(s) filed on 3-12-01

This action is FINAL.

Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 D.C. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

- Claim(s) 17, 19, 22, 27, 28 is/are pending in the application.
Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- Claim(s) 17, 19, 22, 27, 28 is/are rejected.
- Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- See the attached Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
- The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is approved disapproved.
- The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
 - All Some* None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
 - received.
 - received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____
 - received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

- Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- Notice of Reference Cited, PTO-892
- Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s) _____
- Interview Summary, PTO-413
- Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES--

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 17, 19, 22, 27 and 28 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

There is an inconsistency between the language in the preamble and certain portions in the body of the claim, thereby making the scope of the claim unclear. The preamble in claim 17 clearly indicates that a subcombination is being claimed, e.g., "a cover for protecting exposed pipeline joint sections on weight coated offshore underwater pipelines comprising...." This language would lead the examiner to believe that the applicant intends to claim only the subcombination of "a cover," the pipeline being only functionally recited. This presents no problem as long as the body of the claim also refers to the pipeline functionally, such as, "for attachment to said pipeline."

The problem arises when the pipeline is positively recited within the body of the claim, such as, "a pliable cover material overlapping adjacent end portions of the weight coat." There is an inconsistency within the claim; the preamble indicates subcombination, while in at least one instance in the body of the claim there is a positive recital of structure indicating that the combination of cover and pipeline is being claimed. The examiner cannot be sure if applicant's intent is to claim merely the cover or the cover in combination with the pipeline.

Applicant is required to clarify what the claims are intended to be drawn to, i.e., either cover alone or the combination of the cover and pipeline. Applicant should make the language of

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the claim consistent with applicant's intent. In formulating a rejection on the merits, the examiner is considering that the claims are drawn to the subcombination and the claims will be rejected accordingly. If applicant indicates by amendment that the combination claim is the intention, the language in the preamble should be made consistent with the language in the body of the claims. If the intent is to claim the subcombination, then the body of the claims must be amended to remove positive recitation of the combination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 17, 22 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 278,050 to Friessner et al..

Friessner et al. discloses a cover comprising a pliable sheet cover material (5) wrapped in a cylindrical shape and having overlapping side edges (10, 11) sealed together to form an annular space. The annular space is filled with a joint filling material of polyurethane foam. The cover material includes an opening (not referenced, see Fig. 1) in the sheet for injecting the joint filling material.

As concerns claim 22, the polyurethane foam is capable of absorbing moisture.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

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6. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friessner et al. in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,049,480 to Kutschke.

Friessner et al. discloses that the cover sheet is made of plastic but is silent as to the specific type of plastic. Kutschke discloses a cover for protecting exposed pipeline joint sections wherein the cover is form of polyethylene. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a polyethylene cover, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

7. Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friessner et al.

Friessner et al. discloses the claimed invention except for the specific thickness of the cover. However, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to provide the cover with a thickness of between 0.02 inches and 0.5 inches, since applicant has not disclosed that this particular thickness solves any stated problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the invention would perform equally well with the thickness taught by Friessner et al.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 17, 19, 22, 27 and 28 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Teri Pham Luu** whose telephone number is **(703) 305-7421**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **BethAnne Dayoan**, can be reached at **(703) 308-3865**.

Submission of your response by facsimile transmission is encouraged. Group 3620's facsimile number is **(703) 305-3597**. Recognizing the fact that reducing cycle time in the processing and examination of patent applications will effectively increase a patent's term, it is to your benefit to submit responses by facsimile transmission whenever permissible. Such submission will place the response directly in our examining group's hands and will eliminate Post Office processing and delivery time as well as the PTO's mail room processing and delivery time. For a complete list of correspondence **not** permitted by facsimile transmission, see MPEP § 502.01. In general, most responses and/or amendments not requiring a fee, as well as those requiring a fee but charging such fee to a deposit account, can be submitted by facsimile transmission. Responses requiring a fee which applicant is paying by check **should not be** submitted by facsimile transmission separately from the check.

Responses submitted by facsimile transmission should include a Certificate of Transmission (MPEP § 512). The following is an example of the format the certification might take:

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (703) 305-3597) on _____ (Date)

(Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate)

(Signature)

If your response is submitted by facsimile transmission, you are hereby reminded that the original should be retained as evidence of authenticity (37 CFR 1.4 and MPEP § 502.02). Please do not separately mail the original or another copy unless required by the Patent and Trademark Office. Submission of the original response or a follow-up copy of the response after your response has been transmitted by facsimile will only cause further unnecessary delays in the processing of your application; duplicate responses where fees are charged to a deposit account may result in those fees being charged twice.

Communications via Internet e-mail regarding this application, other than those under 35 U.S.C. 132 or which otherwise require a signature, may be used by the applicant and should be directed to **bethanne.dayoan@uspto.gov**.

All Internet e-mail communications will be made of record in the application file. PTO employees do not engage in Internet communications where there exists a possibility that sensitive information could be identified or exchanged unless the record includes a properly signed expressed waiver of the confidentiality requirements of 35 U.S.C. 122. This is more clearly set forth in the Interim Internet Usage Policy published in the Official Gazette of the Patent and Trademark on February 25, 1997 at 1195 OG 89.

Any inquiry of a general nature relating to the status of this application should be directed to the group receptionist at **(703) 308-2168**.



**TERI PHAM LUU
PRIMARY EXAMINER**

tpl
May 17, 2001